

My Notes....

NATIONAL

NITI AAYOG RELEASED SEQI

NITI Aayog has released the School Education Quality Index (SEQI) which evaluates the performance of states and union territories in the school education sector. With this index, the government identifies the strength and weakness in school education and takes required correction measures like policy interventions to rectify them. For ease in comparability, the states have been categorized as small and large states. The union territories have been categorized separately.

What

- As per the report released by the NITI Aayog, among 20 large states in the country 18 have improved their overall performance between 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, which is otherwise referred to as the incremental performance in the report.
- The highest incremental performance has been recorded in Kerala. As against 77.6% score in 2015-2016, the state has recorded 82.2% in 2016-2017.
- Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh have improved their performances in school education sector.
- NITI Aayog's school education report has considered 2015-2016 as the base year and 2016-2017 as the reference year.
- Among all the improving states, Rajasthan has made a quantum jump in the education sector by scoring more than eight percentage points than its previous score.
- Other states like Haryana, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha have improved their ranking as well. The overall performance has declined in Karnataka and Uttarakhand.
- All seven union territories have shown an improvement in their overall performance scores.
- Among the small states the overall performance has increased in five states-- Tripura, Goa, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland. The performance and ranks have decreased in Mizoram, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.



States/UTs	Overall Performance Ranking (2016-17)	
Large States	1. Kerala 2. Rajasthan 3. Karnataka	18. Punjab 19. Jammu & Kashmir 20. Uttar Pradesh
Small States	1. Manipur 2. Tripura 3. Goa	6. Sikkim 7. Meghalaya 8. Arunachal Pradesh
Union Territories	1. Chandigarh 2. Dadra and Nagar Haveli 3. Delhi	4. Daman & Diu 5. Andaman & Nicobar Islands 6. Lakshadweep

Flashback

1. The School Education Quality Index (SEQI) was developed to evaluate the performance of States and Union Territories (UTs) in the school education sector.
2. The index aims to bring an outcomes focus to education policy by providing States and UTs with a platform to identify their strengths and weaknesses and undertake requisite course corrections or policy interventions.
3. **In line with NITI Aayog's mandate** to foster the spirit of competitive and cooperative federalism, the index strives to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices across States and UTs.
4. SEQI aims to drive policy reforms that will improve the quality of school education. The index seeks to institutionalise a focus on enhancing education outcomes by driving improvements in learning levels, access, equity, infrastructure and governance processes.
5. Developed through a collaborative process including key stakeholders such as MHRD, the World Bank and sector experts, the index consists of 30 critical indicators that assess the delivery of quality education.
6. SEQI is based on a set of indicators that measure the overall effectiveness, quality and efficiency of the Indian school education system. The index encourages States/UTs to improve their scores by showing progress across these aspects.

IPCC REPORT ON OCEAN AND CRYOSPHERE

The frequencies of extreme El Niño and La Niña events in the Pacific Ocean is likely to increase in the coming years that could possibly result in more intense wet or dry periods in India, a new report by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said. The Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate is the last in a series of three reports on specific themes that IPCC has published in the last one year.

What

1. In October last year, it published a report on the feasibility of restricting global rise in temperatures to within 1.5 degree Celsius from pre-industrial times. It was followed by a report on land and climate change last month.
2. The report released on 25 September 2019 takes a look at the impact of climate change on oceans and snow-covered land areas.
3. The report says global mean sea-level had increased by 16 cm between 1902 and 2015, and that the rate of increase had doubled of late.
4. Between 2006 and 2015, global mean sea level recorded an average rise of 3.6 mm per year, which was more than double of 1.4 mm per year recorded in the first 90-year-period of the 20th century.
5. The melting of glaciers had contributed significantly to the rise in sea-levels, the report says.
6. Between 2006 and 2015, the Greenland ice sheet lost ice-mass at an average rate of 278 billion tonnes every year, which was enough to result in a global sea-level rise of 0.8 mm per year.

7. During the same period, the Antarctic ice sheet lost a mass of 155 billion tonnes on an average every year. Snow over outside of these two regions, like the glaciers in the Himalayas, together lost an average of 220 billion tonnes of ice every year.

8. The sum of ice sheet and glacier contributions over the year 2006-2015 is the dominant source of sea-level rise, exceeding the effect of thermal expansion of ocean water (due to rising temperatures).

9. Sea-level rise is not globally uniform and varies regionally. Regional differences, within 30 per cent of global mean sea-level rise, result from land ice loss and variations in

ocean warming and circulation, the report says.

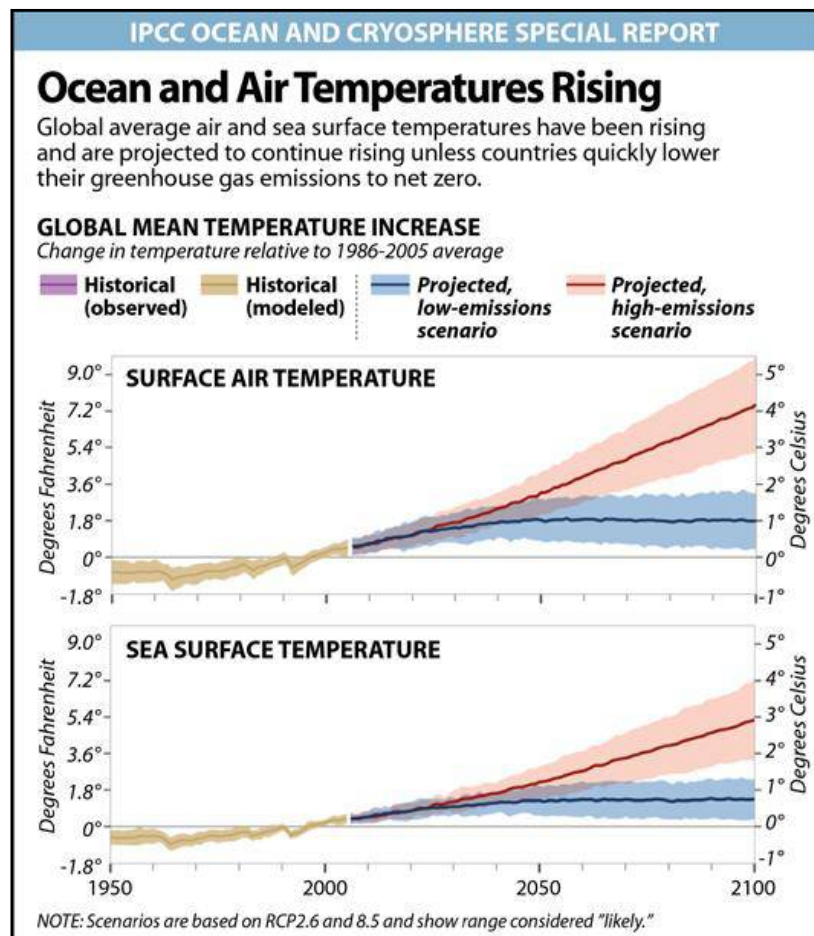
10. Since the mid-20th century, the shrinking cryosphere in the Arctic and high-mountain areas has led to predominantly negative impacts on food security, water resources, water quality, livelihoods, health and well-being, infrastructure, transportation, tourism and recreation, as well as culture of human societies, particularly for Indigenous peoples.

11. El Nino refers to an abnormal sea-surface warming in certain areas of equatorial Pacific Ocean, off the western coast of South America.

12. La Nina is the opposite phenomenon, an abnormal cooling of sea-surface. Together these events influence weather events worldwide.

About IPCC

1. It was created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
2. The objective of the IPCC is to provide governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies.
3. IPCC reports are also a key input into international climate change negotiations.
4. The IPCC is an organization of governments that are members of the United Nations or WMO. The IPCC currently has 195 members.



GOVERNMENT INSTITUTES HIGHEST CIVILIAN AWARD

The government has instituted the highest civilian award for contribution to India's unity and integrity in the name of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The award, comprising a medal and a citation, would not be conferred posthumously except in very rare and highly deserving cases, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in a statement. No monetary grant or cash reward would be attached to the award and not more than three awards would be given in a year. The award would be announced on the occasion of National Unity Day -- the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel on October 31. A notification instituting the 'Sardar Patel National Unity Award' has been issued by the MHA.

What

1. The award seeks to recognise notable and inspiring contributions to promote the cause of national unity and integrity and to reinforce the value of a strong and united India.
2. It will be conferred by the president by a sanad under his hand and seal, and presented by him in a presentation ceremony along with the Padma award presentation ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhawan.
3. An award committee would be constituted by the prime minister, which would include the Cabinet secretary, principal secretary to the prime minister, secretary to the president, home secretary as members and three-four eminent persons selected by the prime minister.
4. Any Indian national or institution or organisation based in India would be able to nominate an individual for consideration for the award. Individuals may also nominate themselves. State governments, Union Territory administrations and ministries may also send nominations.
5. The nominations would be invited every year, the MHA said, adding that the applications would need to be filed online on the website specifically designed by the MHA.
6. All citizens, without distinction of religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth, age or occupation would be eligible for the award.



INDIA IN WDCR 2019

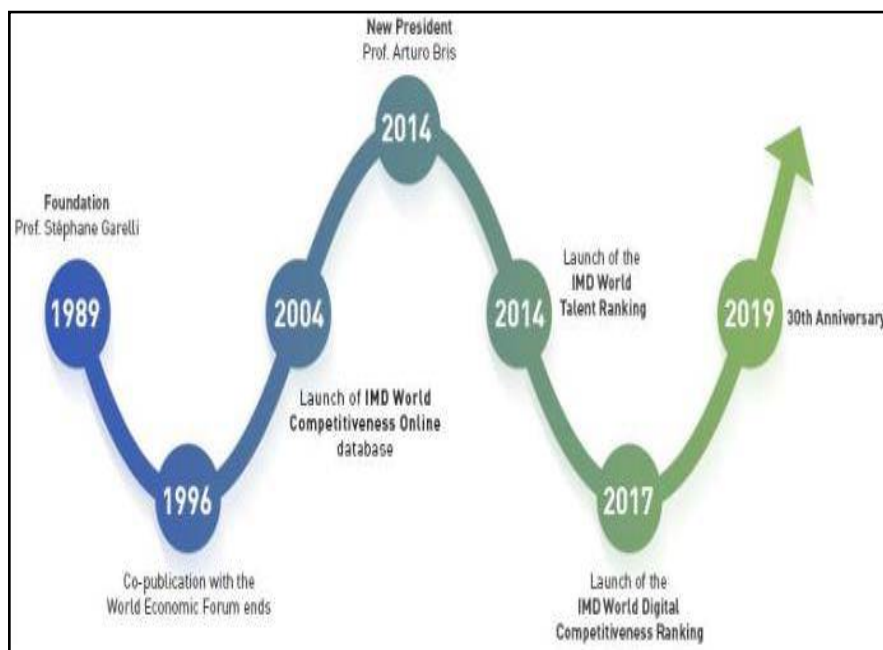
India has advanced four places to 44th position in terms of digital competitiveness in the world as the country has made improvement in terms of knowledge and future readiness to adopt and explore digital technologies, according to a

global report. India rose from 48th place in 2018 to 44th rank this year as the country has improved overall in all factors — knowledge, technology and future readiness — as compared to the previous year's ranking.

What

1. India advanced four places to 44th position in 2019, with the biggest improvement in the technology sub-factor level, holding first position in telecommunications investment, according to the IMD World Digital Competitiveness Ranking 2019 (WDCR).

2. The US was ranked as the **world's most** digitally competitive economy, followed by Singapore in the second place. Sweden was ranked third on the list, followed by Denmark and Switzerland in the 4th and 5th place, respectively.



3. Others in the list of top-10 most digitally competitive economy include Netherlands in the 6th place, Finland (7th), Hong Kong SAR (8th), Norway (9th) and Republic of Korea (10th).
4. The largest jump in the overall ranking was registered by China, moving from 30th to 22nd, and Indonesia, from 62nd to 56th.
5. In the case of China, the improvement originated mainly in the knowledge factor (18th) in which it progressed in the training and education sub-factor (from 46th to 37th) and in scientific concentration (21st to 9th).
6. Several Asian economies advanced significantly in the ranking compared to last year. Hong Kong SAR (8th) and the Republic of Korea (10th) entered the top-10 for the first time, while Taiwan and China moved up to 13th and 22nd place, respectively.
7. India and Indonesia jumped four and six positions, respectively, supported by positive results in talent, training and education as well as the enhancement of technological infrastructure.
8. The Ranking, produced by the IMD World Competitiveness Center, measures the capacity and readiness of 63 nations to adopt and explore digital technologies as a key driver for economic transformation in business, government and wider society.
9. To evaluate an economy, WDCR examines three factors: Knowledge, the capacity to understand and learn the new technologies; technology, the competence to develop new digital innovations; and future readiness, the preparedness for the coming developments.

J&K PUBLIC SAFETY ACT

Former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Farooq Abdullah has been slapped with the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) and may now remain under detention for two years or longer. Abdullah, along with all key politicians of Jammu and Kashmir, was till 15 September 2019 under preventive detention at his residence on Gupkar Road in Srinagar since the first week of August when abrogation of Article 370 was announced. **Abdullah's detention was converted as under PSA** on 15 September 2019. Before that, the detention had been affected under provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code.

What

1. Farooq Saab has been detained at his residence by Home department under PSA, and his house has been declared as Subsidiary Jail.
2. He will continue to stay in his house though. There is no bar on him meeting relatives and friends who visit him. Advisory Board of Home department approved his detention under PSA.
3. The development comes after a habeas corpus petition filed in the Supreme Court by MDMK leader Vaiko for **Abdullah's** production. Supreme Court on 16 September 2019 issued notices to Centre and the state administration on the petition.
4. Abdullah is the second key political personality in J&K to be detained under PSA after August 5 announcements. Bureaucrat-turned-politician Shah Faesal was the first one.
5. He had been detained at Delhi Airport last month while attempting to leave for Turkey and sent back to Kashmir where he had been detained under PSA.

What is the J&K Public Safety Act?

1. The Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), which received the assent of the J&K Governor on April 8, 1978, **is often referred to as a "draconian" law.**
2. The Act was introduced by the government of Sheikh Abdullah as a tough law to prevent the **smuggling of timber and keep the smugglers** "out of circulation".
3. The law allowed the government to detain any person above the age of 16 without trial for a period of two years.
4. Section 22 of the Act provides protection for any **action taken "in good faith" under the Act:** "No suit, prosecution or any other legal proceeding shall lie against any person for anything done or intended to be done in good faith in pursuance of the provisions of this Act."
5. Under Section 23 of the Act, the government is **empowered to** "make such Rules consistent with the provisions of this Act, as may be necessary for carrying out the objects of this Act".

ORDINANCE ISSUED TO BAN E-CIGARETTES

The Government on 19 September 2019 issued an ordinance to ban e-cigarettes, making the production, import, export, transport, sale or advertisements of such "alternative" smoking devices a cognizable offence attracting jail term and fine. First time

violators will face a jail term of up to one year and a fine of Rs 1 lakh. For subsequent offences, a jail term of up to three years or a fine of Rs 5 lakh, or both according to the ordinance. The storage of e-cigarettes shall now be punishable with imprisonment of up to six months or a fine of up to Rs 50,000 or both.

What

1. The Union Cabinet on 18 September 2019 decided to ban production, import, distribution and sale of electronic cigarettes, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said who had headed a Group of Ministers (GoM) on the issue.
2. The ordinance also allows authorised officials to conduct searches in premises stating that where such searches are not permissible, authorities may attach properties, stocks of e-cigarettes or records maintained by the manufacturer, producer exporter, transporter, importer, stockist against whom a complaint has been made.
3. It also said that that the owner or occupier of the place which stock of e-cigarettes shall voluntarily prepare a list of such stock in his possession and without delay submit the stock to the nearest authorised officer.
4. However, e-cigarettes promoting trade bodies, users and other stakeholders slammed the government's move to ban "alternative" smoking device through the ordinance route, alleging it was a "draconian" step taken in haste to protect the conventional cigarette industry.
5. Association of Vapers India (AVI), an organisation representing e-cigarette users, also alleged that it is a black day for 11 crore smokers in India who have been deprived of safer options.

What are e-cigarettes?

1. E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that heat a solution of nicotine and different flavours to create aerosol, which is then inhaled.
2. These devices belong to a category of vapour-based nicotine products called Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS).
3. E-cigarettes and other ENDS products may look like their traditional counterparts (regular cigarettes or cigars), but they also come in other shapes and sizes and can resemble daily use products, including pens and USB drives.
4. Several companies selling ENDS in India have positioned these products as a safer, less harmful alternative to traditional cigarettes or as devices that could help users quit smoking.

ASTRA SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED

India's indigenously designed air-to-air missile Astra was successfully test-fired from the Bay of Bengal off the coast of Odisha on 17 September 2019. The beyond-visual-range missile was launched from Sukhoi-30 MKI as part of user trials.

What

1. As part of the trial, the live aerial target was engaged accurately demonstrating the capability of the first indigenous air-to-air missile. The mission profile was executed in a text book manner.

2. Various radars, electro-optical tracking system and sensors tracked the missile and confirmed its engagement with the target.
 3. Astra has been designed by the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO), the premier research and development organisation of the armed forces in the country.
 4. The Astra is capable of engaging targets of different ranges and altitudes including long-range as well as short-range targets.
- Flashback

 1. Astra is an indigenous Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Astra missile with a range of over 70 km.
 2. The missile can fly towards its target at a speed of over 5,555 kilometres per hour. It has a 15-kilogramme high-explosive pre-fragmented warhead.
 3. The Astra missile has been developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation along with 50 other public and private organisations, involved at various stages of its development.
 4. Modifications of the Sukhoi-30 MKI jets to accommodate Astra missiles has been carried out by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

ICGS 'VARAHA' COMMISSIONED

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh on 25 September 2019 formally commissioned the Coast Guard offshore patrol vessel 'Varaha' at the Chennai Port Trust. After unveiling a plaque commemorating the commissioning ceremony, Singh said the state-of-the-art ship was going to be a force multiplier for Indian Coast Guard, pointing it has capabilities to operate twin engine ALH Helicopters developed indigenously by HAL.

What

1. The name 'Varaha' from puranas reminded of the principle of sacrifice and rescue at sea, saving mother Earth, restoring harmony and strength.
2. The multitude challenges of drug trafficking, oil spill incidents and the growing threat of maritime terrorism calls for cooperation on regional arrangements with various Maritime Nations and Indian Coast Guard over the years has built bonds of diplomacy.
3. The Coast Guard entered into a memorandum of understanding with seven maritime nations for capacity building training collective and cooperative response to deal with Maritime threats.
4. India's engagement with the world has seen an exponential growth and today the coast guard is at the fulcrum operating round the clock for safeguarding national interest in the maritime zones of India apart from building bridges of confidence at sea for the safety, security and growth in the Indian ocean.
5. The offshore patrol vessels (OPV) are part of the contract awarded to Larsen and Toubro to build seven offshore patrol vessels at the Kattuppalli Port. This is the fourth in the series of seven 98-m vessel awarded to Larsen and Toubro.
6. 'Varaha' refers to the third incarnation of Lord Vishnu who took the form of a boar to rescue Goddess Earth from the ocean by lifting her on his tusks.
7. 'Varaha' is the projection of Coast Guard's will and commitment 'to serve and protect' the maritime interest of the country.

8. The ship has been designed and built indigenously by Larsen and Toubro and is fitted with state of the art communication technology and navigation, sensor and machinery.
9. The vessel is equipped with a 30-mm gun and a 12.7mm gun for enhancing the fighting efficiency of the vessel.
10. Some of the special features of the vessel include Integrated Bridge System, Automated power management system, high power external firefighting system, indigenously built Integrated platform management system and Help Traversing System.
11. The ship is planned to be based at New Mangalore under the administrative and operational control of Coast Guard Commander (West) Region.

INDIA'S SECOND SCORPENE-CLASS SUBMARINE

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on 28 September 2019 commissioned the indigenously-built second scorpene-class submarine INS Khanderi into the Indian Navy. The INS Khanderi is the second Kalvari-class diesel-electric submarine after INS Kalvari. The name Khanderi is inspired **by the dreaded 'Sword-tooth fish', a deadly fish known to hunt while swimming close to the bottom of the ocean.** The diesel-electric attack submarine is being built at Mazgaon Dock in Mumbai.

What

1. Khanderi is built at state-run Mazgaon Dock Limited and underwent rigorous sea trials for over two and a half years. All the concerns of the Navy have been addressed.
2. The maximum speed of the INS Khanderi submarine is 20 nautical miles. Its state-of-the-art technology helps reduce noise under the sea.
3. The maximum crew requirement for the submarine is 36, unlike the previous requirement of 60.
4. It saves oxygen availability and increases its capacity to stay underwater for long periods.

Flashback

1. Under a programme called Project 75, India is committed to building six Scorpene-class submarines at a cost of around Rs 25,000 crore.
2. The first Scorpene-class submarine INS Kalvari had been commissioned into the Indian Navy in December 2017.
3. The programme has been undertaken with Transfer of Technology from Naval Group, a state-run submarine builder in France, which was formerly known as DCNS.
4. The INS Khanderi is a conventional diesel-electric submarine and has been manufactured by the state-run Mazgaon Dock Shipbuilders Limited in Mumbai. Its construction had begun in April 2009. It was constructed in five separate segments which were welded together later.
5. The submarine's motto 'Akhand Abhedya Adrishya' signifies the unity of the crew, indomitable spirit and stealth of the platform.

5. The third submarine, INS Karanj was launched in January 2018 and is undergoing sea trials currently.

LAND-ATTACK VERSION OF BRAHMOS

DRDO on 30 September 2019 successfully test fired the land-attack version of 290 km strike range BrahMos supersonic cruise missile off the coast of Odisha. The BrahMos missile test fired has been fitted with increased indigenous equipment and is a version used by the Indian Army.

What

1. BrahMos is a supersonic cruise missile operated by all the three services of the armed forces in different roles and different versions.
2. The BrahMos missile is a joint venture between India and Russia in which DRDO has been working hard to increase the indigenous content to cut down on the import costs.
3. In June 2019, the DRDO had test-fired 450-km range BrahMos, which is equipped with an upgraded guidance system and a Russian-designed seeker which give the missile greater accuracy.
4. The first test of BrahMos extended-range was carried out on March 11, 2017. The extended-range missile can be fired from land as well as sea-based platforms and carries a conventional warhead weighing 200 to 300 kilogrammes.
5. It is to be noted that the 450-km range BrahMos will carry the same amount of fuel as the 290-km version and it will be able to travel a much greater distance due to better fuel efficiency.
6. According to DRDO, this has been achieved by the new computer-controlled injector system that has been programmed to regulate the fuel's flow into the engine's combustor.
7. BrahMos is a "Fire and Forget" missile which is capable of navigating on its own towards a pre-determined and programmed target.
8. The missile is capable of flying as high as 15 km and as low as 10 metres. The missile has identical configuration for land, sea and sub-sea platforms and uses a Transport Launch Canister (TLC) for transportation, storage and launch.

INTERNATIONAL

RUSSIA ACCEPTS PARIS CLIMATE ACCORD

Russia said it would implement the 2015 Paris Agreement to fight climate change after Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev approved a government resolution signifying **Moscow's** final acceptance of the deal. The same resolution said Russia would not technically ratify the accord however due to a legal nuance.

What

1. Mr. Medvedev said Moscow would adapt the accord to existing legal norms. It was unclear what, if any, the legal implications of failing to technically ratify the pact were.
2. **Russia is the world's fourth largest emitter of greenhouse gases** and the biggest emitter not to have ratified the landmark global climate deal.

3. In government resolution, Russia said it did not need to ratify the agreement because Moscow had already undertaken to honour its commitments when it signed the deal in April 2016.
4. Deputy Prime Minister Alexei Gordeyev said it was important for Russia to be part of the Paris accord so that it had a voice when it came to deciding any new measures to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. And any regulatory measures that are drawn up will have to take into consideration our national interests as much as possible.

About Paris Agreement

1. At COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015, Parties to the UNFCCC reached a landmark agreement to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future.
2. The Paris Agreement builds upon the Convention and – for the first time – brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so. As such, it charts a new course in the global climate effort.
3. The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
4. Additionally, the agreement aims to increase the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change, and at making finance flows consistent with a low GHG emissions and climate-resilient pathway.
5. The Paris Agreement entered into force on 4 November 2016, thirty days after the date on which at least 55 Parties to the Convention accounting in total for at least an estimated 55 % of the total global greenhouse gas emissions have deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the Depositary.

India and Paris agreement

1. On 22 April 2016, India was formally sign the Paris climate agreement which was adopted by over 190 countries on December 2015.
2. India ratified the Paris agreement on climate change on 2 October 2016 to become the 62nd nation to join the deal.
3. India is responsible for 6% of the global CO2 emissions following China which accounts for 28%, the United States for 16% and the European Union 10%. In terms of per capita CO2 emissions, 10 other countries are ahead of India.
4. As part of the initial commitments to the agreement, India also plans to reduce its carbon emission intensity - emission per unit of GDP - by 33-35% from 2005 levels over 15 years. It aims at producing 40% of its installed electricity capacity by 2030 from non-fossil fuels.

SOUTH ASIA'S TALLEST TOWER

Sri Lanka unveiled South Asia's tallest tower, costing over \$100 million, 80% of which has been funded by China under the controversial Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The 350-metre-tall 17-storey Lotus Tower, located in the heart of Colombo city,

comprises a television tower, a hotel, a telecommunications museum, restaurants, auditorium, an observation deck, a shopping mall and a conference centre. The tower, spread over an area of 30,600 sq. metres, was constructed at a cost of over \$100 million, 80% of which was funded by China.

What

1. Sri Lanka and China signed the Lotus Tower agreement in 2012 under the **Chinese government's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to build the highest TV tower in South Asia**, with China National Electronics Import and Export Corporation (CEIEC) being the general contractor.
2. India has been severely critical of the BRI, the pet project of Chinese President Xi Jinping, as it comprises the \$50 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
3. The project which began in 2012 under the then-president Mahinda Rajapakse faced numerous delays amid funding issues.
4. The Lotus Tower is foreseen to be one of the significant landmarks and an epitome of **the country's economy, culture and development**.
5. The tower, **which is expected to function as Sri Lanka's 'digital TV tower', is built with fibre optic cables and is fully equipped with necessary telecommunication equipment.**

About CPEC

1. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a collection of infrastructure projects that are currently under construction throughout Pakistan.
2. CPEC is intended to rapidly modernize Pakistani infrastructure and strengthen its economy by the construction of modern transportation networks, numerous energy projects, and special economic zones.
3. On 13 November 2016, CPEC became partly operational when Chinese cargo was transported overland to Gwadar Port for onward maritime shipment to Africa and West Asia while some major power projects were commissioned by late 2017.

'BELT AND ROAD' IN AFGHAN RESOLUTION

China and Russia clashed with the US and other Security Council members over **China's insistence on including a reference to Beijing's USD 1 trillion "belt and road" global infrastructure program** in a resolution on the UN political mission in Afghanistan. **The mission's six-month mandate expires on 17 September 2019 and council members met behind closed doors for over 2 1/2 hours on 16 September 2019, unable to agree on a text because of China's demand.**

What

1. Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia, the current council president, told reporters afterward that diplomats **were working on a new text and "we're in the process of reaching a compromise."** He said the council would meet again late on 17 September 2019 morning in hopes of reaching unanimous agreement.

2. This is the second time in six months that the resolution to keep the UN political mission in Afghanistan operating has become embroiled in controversy over “belt and road” language.
3. Resolutions extending the mandate of the Afghan mission for a year in 2016, 2017 and 2018 had language welcoming and urging further efforts to strengthen regional economic cooperation involving Afghanistan, including through the huge “belt and road” initiative to link China to other parts of Asia as well as Europe and Africa.
4. But in March, when the mandate renewal came up, U.S. deputy ambassador Jonathan Cohen objected, saying Beijing was insisting on making the resolution “about Chinese national political priorities rather than the people of Afghanistan.”
5. He said the Trump administration opposed **China’s demand “that the resolution highlight its belt and road initiative, despite its tenuous ties to Afghanistan and known problems with corruption, debt distress, environmental damage, and lack of transparency.”**
6. **China said the “belt and road” initiative was “conducive to Afghanistan’s reconstruction and economic development,”** saying that since it was launched six years ago 123 countries and 29 international organisations had signed agreements with China on joint development programs.
7. The result of the standoff was that instead of a one-year mandate renewal for the Afghan mission, the mandate was renewed in March for just six months in a simple text, without any substance.
8. **Ahead of this month’s mandate expiration,** Germany and Indonesia drafted a substantive resolution that would extend the mandate for a year.
9. It focused on UN support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-controlled peace process, UN assistance in the September 28 presidential election and strong backing for Afghan security forces “in their fight against terrorism.”
10. Council diplomats said after meeting that China and Russia would likely veto the German-Indonesian draft resolution, and the China-Russia draft would fail to get **the required nine “yes” votes.** So diplomats were meeting on 16 September 2019 night to draft a new resolution.

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

1. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is a political UN mission established at the request of the Government of Afghanistan to assist it and the people of Afghanistan in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.
2. UNAMA was established on 28 March 2002 by United Nations Security Council Resolution. Its original mandate was to support the Bonn Agreement (December 2001).
3. Reviewed annually, this mandate has been altered over time to reflect the needs of the country and was extended for another six months on 15 March 2019, by Resolution (2019).

ECONOMY

GOVT. CUTS CORPORATE TAX TO SPUR INVESTMENT

Government on 20 September 2019 issued an ordinance to reduce the corporate tax rate for domestic firms and new manufacturing units by 10 to 12 percentage points, **effectively bringing India's tax rates on par with its competing Asian peers.** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the effective tax rate for domestic corporates, inclusive of surcharges, will fall from 34.94% to 25.17% if they stop availing any other tax sops. For new manufacturing firms set up after October 1, 2019 and commencing operations by March 31, 2023, the effective tax rate will fall from 29.1% to 17%.

What

1. In order to provide relief to firms who want to continue with the existing regime of exemptions, we are giving some MAT relief – the tax rate has been reduced from 18.5% to 15%.
2. These changes, India is at par and comparable with the lowest tax rates in South East Asian countries.
3. In the face of global headwinds, this puts India right up on the map as a forward looking, business friendly and competitive operating environment.
4. Firms currently availing income tax exemptions and incentives can opt for the new concessional tax regime with a headline tax rate of 22% after the expiry of their existing tax holidays or exemption periods. This option, once exercised, cannot be withdrawn, so as to ensure there are no flip-flops.
5. The Minister said that foreign investors could also avail of the new tax rates, provided they had an establishment in the country or were investing equity into an Indian firm..
6. The larger idea behind the exercise was to eventually phase out all exemptions and incentives. On the other hand, surcharges on income tax would be eased out too, she hinted, in response to a query.

Why is the government cutting taxes?

1. The corporate tax cut is part of a series of steps taken by the government to tackle the slowdown in economic growth, which has dropped for five consecutive quarters to 5% in the June quarter.
2. The most immediate reason behind the tax cut may be the displeasure that various corporate houses have shown against the **government's policies.**
3. Many investors, for instance, were spooked by the additional taxes on them that were announced by the government during the budget in July and began pulling money out of the country.
4. The government hopes that the new, lower tax rates will attract more investments into the country and help revive the domestic manufacturing sector which has seen lackluster growth.

Corporate tax rate slashed

1. Finance Minister slashed effective corporate tax to 25.17 per cent inclusive of all cess and surcharges for domestic companies.
2. The new rate will be effective from the current fiscal which began on April 1.

Tax on share buyback withdrawn

1. With an aim to provide relief to the listed companies which have already made a public announcement of buyback before 5 July 2019, the government said that the tax on buyback of shares shall not be charged.

15% MAT for companies seeking exemption

1. The firms opting for 22 per cent income tax slab would not have to pay a minimum alternative tax (MAT).
2. The domestic manufacturing companies incorporated after October 1, can now pay income tax at a rate of 15 per cent without any incentives. With this, the effective tax rate for new manufacturing companies will be 17.01 per cent inclusive of surcharge and cess.

Tax relief for FPIs on capital gains

1. The government also came up with measures on capital gains made by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) and buyback tax for listed companies.
2. The enhanced surcharge will not be applicable to capital gains arising on sale of any security, including derivatives in the hands of foreign portfolio investors.

RBI HOUSING COMMITTEE REPORT

The implementation of recent recommendations submitted by the **RBI's housing** finance committee **will be credit positive for the country's** residential mortgage-backed securities (RMBS). In May this year, the RBI had set up a committee on the development of housing finance securitisation market to review the state of the mortgage-securitisation market and make recommendations to address various issues relating to originators/investors as well as market micro structure. The report was submitted to the Governor Shaktikanta Das on September 9. After reviewing the existing state of mortgage-backed securitisation, it gave a host of recommendations on the legal, tax structures of mortgage backed securitisation transactions and standardisation of such practices.

What

1. The report also recommended specific measures for facilitating secondary market trading in mortgage securitisation instruments.
2. **Global rating agency Moody's in a report said the recommendations to standardize** loan servicing processes across home loan lenders will make it easier to transfer loan servicing from one provider to another, if the original provider fails.
3. The recommendation would be credit positive for Indian RMBS because it will increase the likelihood that a suitable replacement can step in and take the place of a **failed operator," the agency's assistant vice president and analyst, Dipanshu Rustagi,** said.
4. The committee recommended linking of home loans pricing to an external, such as the repo rate. He said such a correlation will mitigate interest rate risk in RMBS transactions as it will remove the interest rate mismatch between a lenders own benchmark rate and coupon rates.
5. The RBI recommended standardizing loan documentation criteria and establishing minimum loan eligibility and disclosure requirements for RMBS deals.

6. **The move will increase transparency in the country's mortgage sector**, reducing risks in the underlying loans backing RMBS deals, Rustagi said. He said the recommendation on the tax treatment of securitization transactions will remove uncertainty for originators and investors.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NEW BLOCKBUSTER WHEAT

After HD-2967 and HD-3086, which together occupies roughly 40% of the **country's total wheat area**, the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) has released yet another potential blockbuster variety for planting in the upcoming rabi crop season. Called HD-3226 or Pusa Yashasvi, the new variety has recorded a weighted average yield of 57.5 quintals per hectare in coordinated trials at 56 locations over three years of testing (2015-16 to 2017-18). This is comparable to or higher than the mean yields for HD-3086, HD-2967 and other "check" varieties.

What

- The genetic yield potential, at 79.6 quintals, is even more compared to other varieties. HD-3326 also has higher content of protein and gluten (which contributes to strength and elasticity of the dough), apart from more zinc (at 36.8 parts per million, as against 34.8 for HD-3086 and 36 for HD-2967) and good chapatti, bread and biscuit quality.
- No less significant is HD-**3326's high** levels of resistance against all major rust fungi — yellow/stripe, brown/leaf and black/stem.
- PBW-343, the workhorse wheat variety that the Punjab Agricultural University introduced in 1995, was being grown in nearly 10 million hectares (mh) across India till the last decade. But its vulnerability to yellow and brown rust, causing significant yield losses, became apparent from around 2007.
- With the release of HD-2967 (Pusa Borlaug) in 2011-12 and Pusa-3086 (Pusa Gautami) in 2013-14, PBW-343 practically receded into the background.
- HD-2967 took hardly five years to reach 10 mh, beating all records for a single variety or hybrid of any crop to cover such a large area in as short a time. The

Flashback

- The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), commonly known as the Pusa Institute is India's national Institute for agricultural research, education and extension.
- The name Pusa Institute is derived from the fact that the institute was originally located in Pusa Bihar as the Imperial Institute of Agricultural Research in 1911.
- It was then renamed as the Imperial Agricultural Research Institute in 1919 and following a major earthquake in Pusa, it was relocated to Delhi in 1936.
- The current institute in Delhi is financed and administered by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- The IARI was responsible for the research leading to the "Green Revolution in India" of the 1970s.

combined area under the two varieties is currently estimated at 12 mh, which is 40% of India's total annual wheat acreage of 30 mh.

6. HD-2967, too, has now become susceptible to yellow rust, while HD-3086 is starting to show susceptibility to brown rust.
7. The new variety is highly resistant to all rusts and Karnal bunt, besides other fungal pathogen diseases such as flag smut, powdery mildew and foot rot, says Rajbir Yadav, principal scientist at IARI and the main breeder of HD-3326.
8. **HD-3326's other big draw is its amenability to "conservation agriculture". While this variety's normal sowing time is from November 1, farmers can plant it even 7-10 days before, immediately after harvesting paddy. They could use a Happy Seeder to directly drill the wheat seeds in the field, without any ploughing or burning the leftover paddy stubble and loose straw.**
9. **This isn't possible with HD-2967 or HD-3086, where the crop tends to prematurely flower if you sow by October 25. The earheads (containing the flowers) would emerge from the tillers (the side stems that grow from initial parent shoot) much earlier than desired.**
10. **In HD-3226, there is no such problem of the plant's vegetative growth being compromised due to early sowing. Instead, it will grow to its full maturity duration of 150 days and is ready for harvesting by end-March/early-April, 10-15 days before other wheat varieties.**

NEW FROG NAMED AFTER GREEK GODDESS

A team of scientists from Delhi University and the Zoological Survey of India have discovered a new species of rice frog or chorus frog in Arunachal Pradesh. **Named 'eos'** after the mythological Greek Goddess of Dawn, **"personifying the region where the new species was discovered, Arunachal Pradesh"**, the frog belongs to genus Microhyla — **"a group of narrow-mouthed frogs that is primarily and widely distributed in Asia"** — that currently comprises 49 recognised species.

What

1. The study by S D Biju and Sonali Garg (DU), Gopinathan Maheswaran (Zoological Survey of India) and Rachunliu G Kamei (Natural History Museum, London) was published on 23 September 2019 in Zootaxa, a peer-reviewed international journal.
2. **The frog was discovered from "riparian habitats in a primary evergreen forest" called Rani Jheel in Namdapha Tiger Reserve of Arunachal Pradesh, the easternmost protected area in the country.**
3. Scientists said **the frog was "confirmed to represent a distinct new species after detailed comparison of both DNA and morphology with all previously known members of the group found across South, Southeast, and East Asia" and was "formally described as the 50th member of the narrow-mouthed chorus frog genus microhyla known from the world".**
4. They said microhyla eos **"strikingly differs from other narrow-mouthed chorus frogs by characters such as its size, body shape, colouration and markings, foot webbing, and digit tip morphology".**
5. Our discovery shows that the actual number of frog species in Northeast India, even in the relatively common and well-studied groups, is higher than current estimates.

6. More extensive studies are required to scientifically identify and describe the Northeastern frogs, which are already facing extinction threats from various human activities.

STARSHIP'S PLANS UNVEILED

SpaceX CEO Elon Musk unveiled a prototype design of its next-generation Starship spacecraft that will take people or cargo to the moon, Mars or other destinations in space or around Earth. Starship will allow us to inhabit other worlds to make life as we know it multiplanetary. According to Musk, Starship has been designed for full, “rapid reusability”.

What

1. **The latest version of the Starship was showcased at the company’s test site at Boca Chica in South Texas in the US on September 28.** The date also marks the 11th anniversary of the first successful orbital launch of Falcon 1, which is **SpaceX’s first rocket.**
2. **SpaceX’s Starship spacecraft** will be capable of carrying up to 100 people on long-duration interplanetary flights and deliver as much as around 100 tons of payload for building bases on Moon and Mars cities.
3. **Musk’s ultimate goal is to** colonise Mars over the next 100 years and he has been quite vocal of his idea in the past.
4. According to the SpaceX CEO, the Earth will face a near-extinction event at some point in time, which is **why a “backup” plan for all humankind is needed.**
5. Starship will be the most powerful rocket in history, capable of carrying humans to the Moon, Mars, and beyond. Starship is expected to reach orbit in six months.

Flashback

1. Starship was first unveiled in 2016 as a fully reusable spacecraft and back then, it was called Interplanetary Transport System (ITS).
2. In 2017, it was renamed the Big Falcon Rocket (BFR) and the design was updated as well. The spacecraft was finally named Starship in 2018 with more design improvements.
3. The Starship is 164 feet (50 meters) tall and has a diameter of nine meters. Starship will be launched into space with the help of its Super Heavy booster, which can include up to 37 Raptor engines, though only 24 would be required for each mission. Super Heavy measures 223 feet in length, while its diameter is also nine meters.

NEW MARINE SPECIES FOUND IN GULF OF MANNAR

The Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute (SDMRI) has recorded 62 new species and 77 new patch reef areas during a recent baseline study of biological resources in the Gulf of Mannar. The study conducted as part of National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change shows the number of species recorded in the Gulf of Mannar has increased from 4,223 to 4,285.

What

1. The north sector of Gulf of Mannar between Thoothukudi and Rameswaram is studied regularly, but the southern part between Thoothukudi and Kanyakumari has always been left out.
2. The present study provides detailed baseline information on underwater biological diversity of Gulf of Mannar including the southern part.
3. While the northern part has small islets in a shallow water system, the southern part has greater depth, with rocky and sandy substrate housing unique communities — organisms that live on the bottom.
4. The study, held from May 2017 to March 2019, covered a coastal distance of 345 km starting from Kundukal (Rameswaram) in the north to Kanniyakumari in the south, and stretching 10 km into the sea.
5. It was done under the supervision of Environment and Forest Departments of Government of Tamil Nadu and NABARD.
6. The entire coastal region was divided into 10 major zones and further into various sub-zones for the purpose of study.
7. The 62 newly recorded species in the study include 14 species of hard corals (the number of coral species identified has increased from 117 to 131), 17 species of soft corals, 11 species of sponges, 16 species of mollusks and two species of seaweeds and fishes each.
8. In addition, more than 50 unidentified species were observed, which are believed to be new to Gulf of Mannar. Similarly, a total of 39 new seagrass patches have been identified covering an area of 8.51 sq.km.

Flashback

1. The Gulf of Mannar is a large shallow bay forming part of the Laccadive Sea in the Indian Ocean.
2. It lies between the west coast of Sri Lanka and the southeastern tip of India, in the Coromandel Coast region.
3. The chain of low islands and reefs known as Ramsethu, also called Adam's Bridge, which includes Mannar Island, separates the Gulf of Mannar from Palk Bay, which lies to the north between Sri Lanka and India.
4. The Malvathu Oya (Malvathu River) of Sri Lanka and the estuaries of Thamirabarani River and Vaipar River of South India drain into the Gulf.
5. Located on the southeastern tip of the subcontinent, the Gulf of Mannar is known to harbour over 3,600 species of flora and fauna, making it one of the richest coastal regions in Asia.

GENES IMPLICATED IN BIPOLAR DISORDER IDENTIFIED

A study by researchers from the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) and the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), in Bengaluru, identifies two specific genes which may be related to bipolar disorder, a neuropsychiatric disorder that has been studied widely. While there are strong indications that genetics plays a role in it, the specific genes whose mutations result in the individual being affected are difficult to identify. In a paper published recently in the journal

Bipolar Disorders, the team describes their decade-long work studying four generations of a family with several members in each generation affected. In all, 28 members of one family were genotyped, and of these 11 were affected by bipolar disorder.

What

1. A variety of genetic parameters and models of the disorder needed to be tested. Further, disease-gene mapping is very sensitive to genetic parameters and defining this in a psychiatric disorder like BPD is a challenge.

2. Bipolar disorder is an illness that affects about 0.8% of the global population. Also known as manic-depressive illness, it is characterised by mood swings, irrational behaviour and phases of mania or extreme highs, and at other times, phases of depression.

3. The figures in India are not definitely known due to lack of reporting and diagnosis and poor documentation.

However, judging by the global estimate, a significant number of Indians could be affected by this disease.

4. If in a family there are multiple members with the disorder, then what is shared among the ill members, and not shared by the unaffected members may help identify the gene.
5. However, since the human genome is over three billion base pairs [long], we use a number of markers to identify which region of the genome is shared, and look up the **gene in that region.** He is quick to clarify that with psychiatric genetics, not all those at risk may develop the disease.
6. The experiment involves doing thousands of genotyping reactions and a large amount of sequencing of reactions for a large family with several affected members.
7. The group identified regions within chromosome 1 and chromosome 6 and, subsequently, found that variants of two genes (KANK4 and CAP2) were the likely candidates.

Gene family

1. KANK1, one of the KANK family of genes, has been implicated in cerebral palsy, spastic quadriplegia-2 and steroid resistant nephritic syndrome. Other genes in the KANK family have been linked to diseases, so it is likely that this variant in KANK4, too, may be linked to disease.
2. The authors also describe that these mutations in KANK4 and CAP2 are rare variants. These occur in less than 1% of the population, often fewer than one in a thousand.
3. Today there are nearly 150 families across the world with structures like this. These give us a toe-hold into biology, illuminating clinical molecular mechanisms involved.
4. The study suggests understanding the consequences of this variation in biological processes in the brain and further analysis of these two genes in people with bipolar disorder will be beneficial and help understand the biological aspects of the disease.

MISCELLANEOUS

ASTEROID NAMED AFTER PANDIT JASRAJ

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has named an asteroid, discovered in 2006, after Indian classical singer Pandit Jasraj. The asteroid, or more formally known as a minor planet, is located between Mars and Jupiter, and was discovered on November 11, 2006, by the Catalina Sky Survey, whose telescopes are based in Arizona in the United States. The privilege of naming a planet is first given to discoverers, who have 10 years to propose a name. The discoverer or team is expected to write a short citation, **explaining the reasons for assigning the name, according to the IAU's guidelines.**

What

1. All names proposed are judged by the 15-member Working Group for Small Body Nomenclature (CSBN) of the IAU, comprising professional astronomers with research interests in minor planets and/or comets from around the world.
2. As of September, there are 5, 41,131 numbered minor planets of a total of 7, and 97,078 observed bodies, with the rest being unnumbered minor planets.
3. "Sangeet Martand Pandit Jasraj (b. 1930) is an exponent of Indian classical vocal music.
4. Jasraj is the recipient of numerous awards, honours, and titles, including the prestigious Padma Vibhushan and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.
5. His distinctive voice traverses remarkable four-and-a-half octaves, reads an IAU **citation available on the California Institute of Technology's database on small planetary bodies.**

GLOBAL CANCER CARE NETWORK

India has launched a global cancer care network that will allow integration of hospitals and cancer care institutes from partner countries with the National Cancer Grid (NCG) of the country. The objective of the network is to remove disparity in cancer care globally. K N Vyas, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) secretary and Atomic Energy Commission chairman, after launching the global cancer care network in Vienna on 17 September 2019 on the sidelines of 63rd General conference of IAEA, said, I am happy **to announce that India is launching "NCG-Vishwam Cancer Care Connect" (NCG-Vishwam 3C). Vishwam is a Sanskrit word meaning 'universal' or 'global'. Through this connect; we shall join hands with all interested partner countries in our fight against cancer."**

What

1. Vyas said, Our partner countries shall benefit in different ways through the NCG Vishwam connect, such as NCG guidelines for management of common cancers, second-opinion service for patients and physicians, decisions on treatment and availability of massive open online courses.
2. Eleven countries showed interests in the NCG-Vishwam soon after its launch. I am happy that different hospitals from Russia, Kazakhstan, Vietnam, Nepal, UAE, Afghanistan, Jamaica, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Zambia have agreed to become part of the NCG-Vishwam.
3. Radioisotopes for detection of cancer and treatment are exclusively produced by the department (DAE). The department is also involved in the development of newer

radiopharmaceuticals and a cobalt teletherapy machine, called Bhabhatron, for **cancer treatment,” he said.**

4. The National Cancer Grid is managed by Tata Memorial Centre and was established in 2012 with a vision for creating uniform standards of cancer care across the country.
5. Tata Memorial Centre, which is an integral part of DAE, has been a premier cancer care facility since 1941 and has struck an excellent balance with trilogy of patient care, education and research.
6. The centre today has seven hospitals, including the famous Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, and one research institute catering to the needs of over five lakh patients every year, including one lakh new patients.

PATNAIK PANEL SUBMITS REPORT

The one-person Justice A K Patnaik Committee, looking into charges of possible “fixing of benches” **in the Supreme Court, has submitted its report to the apex court.**

The one-judge panel was constituted as part of the process which came into play after charges of sexual allegations were made against Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi by a junior employee in his office. Subsequently, an advocate Utsav Bains spoke of a conspiracy against the topmost Court.

What

1. In an order in April, a special bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra, also comprising Justices Rohinton Nariman and Deepak Gupta, said, Considering the factual gamut and the affidavits filed by advocate Utsav Singh Bains.
2. **The ‘in-house’** committee probing allegations of harassment concluded its findings separately and Justice Patnaik started his probe only after that committee completed its work.
3. Justice Patnaik resumed his work after the court vacations, called for a lot of material from the courts and investigative agencies and also held extensive interviews with the Directors of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and **Delhi’s Police Commissioner**. Advocate Utsav Bains was also summoned by Justice Patnaik and heard last month.
4. **The report has been submitted in a ‘sealed cover’, as mandated by the bench which appointed the panel.** Justice Patnaik is in Paris till October.
5. It was in an **“extraordinary sitting” on April 20**, after allegations of harassment against the Chief Justice became public, that the CJI termed the complaint as an attempt to **“deactivate” the office and a conspiracy to threaten the independence of the judiciary.**

GOOGLE WINS ‘RIGHT TO BE FORGOTTEN’ FIGHT

Google won its fight against tougher “right to be forgotten” rules after Europe’s top court said on 24 September 2019 it does not have to remove links to sensitive personal data worldwide, rejecting a French demand. The case is seen as a test of whether Europe can extend its laws beyond its borders and whether individuals can demand the removal of personal data from internet search results without stifling free speech and legitimate public interest.

What

1. Currently, there is no obligation under EU law, for a search engine operator who grants a request for de-referencing made by a data subject to carry out such a de-referencing on all the versions of its search engine, the European Court of Justice (CJEU) said.
2. However, EU law requires a search engine operator to carry out such a de-referencing on the versions of its search engine corresponding to all the (EU) member states.
3. The **case arose after France's privacy watchdog CNIL in 2016** fined Google 100,000 euros (\$109,790) for refusing to delist sensitive information from internet search results globally **upon request in what is called the "right to be forgotten"**. Google took its fight to the French Council of State which subsequently sought advice from the CJEU.
4. The Council also asked for advice after CNIL decided not to order Google to remove links from internet search results based on the names of four individuals.
5. These included a satirical photomontage of a female politician, an article referring to someone as a public relations officer of the Church of Scientology, the placing under investigation of a male politician and the conviction of someone for sexual assaults against minors.

Flashback

1. In 2014, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled in favour of Mario Costeja González, a Spanish man who was unhappy that searching his name on Google threw up a newspaper article from 1998.
2. He approached the newspaper in 2009 to get the article removed as he felt it was no longer relevant. The newspaper felt it was inappropriate to erase the article, and Gonzalez then approached Google to not throw up the article when his name is searched.
3. ECJ asked Google to **delete "inadequate, irrelevant or no longer relevant"** data from its search results, when a member of the public requests so.
4. The **ruling came to be known as the "right to be forgotten"** and has been hence reinforced in data protection laws and regulations in the EU, including **EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**.

Indian draft bill

1. The B.N. Srikrishna Committee report has laid significant emphasis on obtaining the consent of an individual to process and use personal data.
2. **The committee said consent must be "informed", "specific" and "clear"** and needs to be capable of being withdrawn as easily as it was given.
3. The draft Personal Data Protection Bill 2018 has a section on the Right to be Forgotten. But the proposed bill does not provide right to erasure.
4. Section 27 of the bill has listed out three scenarios in which an individual will have the "right to restrict or prevent continuing disclosure of personal data" or the right to be forgotten, in a sense.
5. This will be applicable if data disclosure is no longer necessary, the consent to use data has been withdrawn or if data is being used contrary to the provisions of the law.

GRETA THUNBERG WINS ‘ALTERNATIVE NOBEL’

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg is among four people named on 25 September 2019 as the winners of a Right Livelihood Award, also known as the “Alternative Nobel.” **Thunberg is being recognized “for inspiring and amplifying political demands for urgent climate action reflecting scientific facts,” the prize foundation said.** It added that the 16-year-old, who has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, **“personifies the notion that everyone has the power to create change. Her example has inspired and empowered people from all walks of life to demand political action.**

What

1. Created in 1980, the annual Right Livelihood Award honors efforts that the prize founder, Swedish-German philanthropist Jakob von Uexkull, felt were being ignored by the Nobel prizes. The four winners will each receive 1 million kronor (\$103,000).
2. The foundation also gave its 2019 award to Davi Kopenawa and the Hutukara Yanomami Association, **representing Brazil’s indigenous tribe, for protecting the Amazon forest and its people;** Moroccan activist Aminatou Haidar **“for her steadfast nonviolent action” for Western Sahara** and Chinese lawyer Guo Jianmei for her work **for women’s rights in China.**
3. Ole von Uexkull, **the foundation’s executive director and nephew of the founder,** said **“we honor four practical visionaries whose leadership has empowered millions of people to defend their inalienable rights and to strive for a liveable future for all on planet Earth.” An award ceremony is planned in Stockholm on Dec. 4, six days before the Nobel prizes are handed out.**
4. **Thunberg’s** campaign, begun on Aug. 20, 2018 when she held solitary **demonstrations outside Sweden’s parliament, skipping classes once a week to protest climate change.** Her solo protest has inspired millions across the world to stage protests urging leaders to tackle global warming.

INDIAN GIRL GETS CHANGEMAKER AWARD

Payal Jangid, a girl from Rajasthan, received the Changemaker Award at the Goalkeepers Global Goals Awards on 24 September 2019 in recognition of her campaign to end child labour and child marriage. She was presented the award by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

What

1. Jangid, who fought against her own marriage at a young age, is now campaigning to discourage child marriage and persuade parents to keep their children in education. Her campaign includes organising rallies, putting up posters, painting walls and going door-to-door to speak to families on the same.
2. Payal Jangid **received the Changemaker Award at tonight’s Goalkeepers Global Goals Awards.** This award recognizes her campaign to end child labor and child marriage.
3. Her father Pappuram Jangid claims her initiative has seen a drastic drop in child marriages. She has brought major improvement; almost all kids are going to school **now. There hasn’t been child marriage in the village in the last decade.**

4. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the recipients of the Global Goalkeeper Awards this year for his government's initiatives on sanitation, including the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

PM RECEIVES GOALKEEPERS AWARD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 25 September 2019 received the Global Goalkeeper Award from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for his **government's** initiatives on sanitation, including the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Goalkeepers is the **foundation's campaign to accelerate progress towards sustainable** development goals. Modi has been chosen for the award — one of the most prestigious awards in the development sector — for the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which was among the first programmes announced by him in his first stint as prime minister.

What

1. This honour is not mine but of the crores of Indians who not only fulfilled the Swachh Bharat dream but also made it a part of their daily lives, Modi said on accepting the award.
2. Receiving the award in the year of **Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth** anniversary was significant for him, the prime minister said, adding that when 130 crore people take a pledge, any challenge can be overcome.
3. In the last five years a record more than 11 crore toilets were constructed. If this mission has benefited someone the most it is the poor of this country and the women.
4. The Swachh Bharat Mission can serve as a model for other countries around the world that urgently need to improve access **to sanitation for the world's poorest**.
5. Addressing a global climate action summit organised by the UN Secretary General, **the Prime Minister stressed that "time for talking is over" and that the "world needs to act now"**.
6. In 2014, immediately after assuming power after a landslide win in the Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the Swachh Bharat campaign and vowed to eliminate open defecation nationwide in five years.
7. The mission has two thrusts: Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (rural), which operates under the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (urban), which operates under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
8. **In 2018, Modi had received the United Nation's highest environmental honour, the "Champions of the Earth Award", from United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.**

Flashback

1. In 2015, world leaders agreed to 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development to achieve a better world by 2030.
2. Started by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Goalkeepers is a catalyst for action toward these goals—bringing together leaders from around the world to accelerate progress toward ending poverty and fighting inequality.

1.